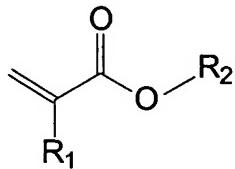


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Claim 1 (amended). A pressure-sensitive adhesive composition comprising polymers, copolymers, or both, based at least predominantly on (meth)acrylic acid, derivatives thereof, or both, wherein said composition possesses an outgassing level of not more than 50 µg/g in total, as measured by the tesa method.

Claim 2 (amended). The pressure-sensitive adhesive composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polymers, copolymers or both are prepared using at least the following monomers:

(a) from 65 to 100% by weight of acrylic acid derivatives, methacrylic acid derivatives, or both, of the general formula



where R₁ = H or CH₃ and R₂ = an alkyl chain of 2 to 20 carbon atoms,

(b) from 0 to 35% by weight of vinyl compounds containing functional groups.

Claim 3 (amended). A process for preparing a pressure-sensitive adhesive composition as claimed in claim 1, using a polyacrylate solution obtainable by free-radical addition polymerization, which comprises

a concentration step in which

- ◆ after polymerization, an entrainer is added to the polyacrylate solution,
- ◆ the entrainer-admixed polyacrylate solution is passed into an extruder in which said solution is subjected to a carrier distillation,

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- ◆ the concentration thus produces a polyacrylate composition which is processed further from the melt.

Claim 4 (amended). The process as claimed in claim 3, wherein
in at least one further step following concentration, a postpurification is conducted by adding the same entrainer again, or a further entrainer, to the concentrated polyacrylate composition and carrying out a further carrier distillation in the extruder.

Claim 5 (amended). The process as claimed in claim 3 or 4, wherein at least the extruder in the concentration step is a corotating or counterrotating twin-screw extruder.

Claim 6 (amended). The process as claimed in claim 3 or 4, wherein steam is used as entrainer.

Claim 7 (amended). The process as claimed in claim 3 or 4, wherein

- ◆ the concentrated polyacrylate composition is applied to a backing material
- ◆ and the polyacrylate composition on the backing material is subjected to a crosslinking reaction.

Claim 8 (amended). The process as claimed in claim 7, wherein crosslinking is carried out using UV light in a wavelength range from 250 to 400 nm, with the proviso that the output of light in the wavelength range from 300 to 400 nm makes up at least 70% of the total irradiated light output.

Claim 9 (amended). An adhesive tape comprising a backing material having a pressure-sensitive adhesive composition as claimed in claim 1 or 2 applied to one or both sides.

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Claim 10 (amended). The adhesive tape as claimed in claim 9, comprising a backing material having an outgassing tendency of less than 5 µg/g.

Preliminary Amendment

--Claim 11. The pressure-sensitive adhesive composition of claim 1, wherein said outgassing level is less than 10 µg/g.

Claim 12. The process of claim 4, wherein said further carrier distillation is conducted at higher temperatures and lower vacuums than the preceding distillation.

Claim 13. The process of claim 8, wherein the light in the wavelength range of 300 to 400 nm makes up at least 90% of the total irradiated light output.--

REMARKS

The Preliminary Amendment is being filed to eliminate multiple dependency, and to conform the claims to conventional format.

For the record, Applicants emphasize that although the claims were amended, and, therefore, might be argued to have been amended for a reason substantially related to patentability, a fair reading of the amended claims will reveal that the departures from